

MasterBridge

Summer Online Swiss Pairs

What's an overbid?

by RAKESH KUMAR



Rakesh Kumar describes himself as an enthusiast who makes enough errors to have plenty of material for bridge columns.

Proving that there's still plenty of interest in online Congresses on BBO, there was a strong turnout for the MasterBridge February Swiss Pairs, with 34 pairs eager for a day of bridge. The event was run as 6 × 8-board matches, scored as IMPs, and was very ably directed by Nick Fahrer.

The winners were Julian Abel and Colin Clifford, who had a solid day at the virtual table and were never beaten. Not too far behind were Pam and Ross Crichton, followed by Di Coats and Jan Clarke in third spot. And then a pretty fair gap to the rest of us ...

There was no shortage of opportunities to get things wrong, mostly involving tricky decisions about how high to bid. Try your hand at these problems before I show you the deals.

Firstly, vulnerable against opponents who are not vulnerable, you hold this highly distributional strong hand:

♠ 94
♥ 2
♦ AKQJ874
♣ AKQ

In first seat, partner opens a multi-2 ♦. If you inquire, you will discover that s/he has a good weak 2-bid in spades. What contract do you want to be in?

Secondly, both vulnerable, as dealer you open 1 ♣ with the hand below:

♠ KJ3
♥ A5
♦ T4
♣ KJT642

LHO makes a weak jump overcall of 2 ♥ and partner bids 2NT, notionally 10-12 hcp with a stopper. What will you do?

And finally, once again vulnerable against opponents who are not vulnerable, partner opens another multi-2 ♦ as dealer. This is your hand:

♠ Q72
♥ K
♦ QJT5
♣ AK974

It doesn't matter whether you inquire with 2NT and then bid game when partner shows a good weak 2-bid in spades, or bid 2♥ correctable and then invite when partner bids 2♠, or simply jump to 4♠ after partner's suit is revealed. The opponents now get into the act via a two-suited 4NT by LHO and bid to 5♥. What will you do?

This was the first of those deals. It seems to me that with an utterly self-sufficient diamond suit, one way of looking at it is to ask whether partner can cover 2 of your 3 losers, in which case 6♦ looks like a very attractive contract. Alternatively, if you stick with the notion that a weak hand always plays better in its long suit, you might want to consider 6♠. But you surely, surely want to be in a slam – after all, how can partner have a "good weak 2-bid" at adverse vulnerability without the ace and probably also the king of the suit? Well, maybe if s/he has ♥A and ♠KQ ... but that's also good enough.

Board 22

Dealer E | Vul E-W

♠ QT
♥ AKT9
♦ 2
♣ 985432

♠ 94
♥ 2
♦ AKQJ874
♣ AKQ

	N		E	
W	—			
	S			

♠ AKJ863
♥ 73
♦ 653
♣ J7

♠ 752
♥ QJ8654
♦ T9
♣ T6

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	2	-	-
S	-	-	2	-	-
E	-	6	-	6	1
W	-	6	-	6	1

However, across the 17 tables only 6 were in a making slam: 2 were in 6♦ while 4 were in 6♠, the latter proving to be bullet-proof with a doubleton ♠Q10 on side. One pair may have got a little too excited as they played in 7♦ ... they certainly weren't guilty of underbidding, though!

On the second board of interest, how much would you upgrade the North hand?

Board 45

Dealer N | Vul All

♠ KJ3
♥ A5
♦ T4
♣ KJT642

♠ AQT7
♥ 6
♦ A765
♣ Q983

	N		E	
W	+			
	S			

♠ 862
♥ KJT872
♦ Q82
♣ 5

♠ 954
♥ Q943
♦ KJ93
♣ A7

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	4	2	1	2	3
S	4	2	1	2	3
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

I decided that if partner had a good 11-12 hcp, my clubs might be good for quite a few tricks, so even though I only had 12 hcp myself, I raised partner to 3NT. In fact partner had a mere 10 hcp, but proceeded to demonstrate that it was just as well she was playing the contract. On the assumption that the heart suit was distributed 1-2-6-4, she took West's lead of ♥6 with the ace in dummy, played a club to the ace and on a club back to the 10, discovered the bad break. Completely unfazed, she cashed ♣K and ran ♦10, ducked all round, followed by another diamond to the 9 and ace.

West now exited with ♠10 and partner bravely inserted the jack. When this held, the show was over: a club to West's queen left him in an impossible position. On a spade return, dummy subsequently wins 2 clubs but will lose a heart at the end. When West chose to return a diamond instead, partner won her 2 tricks in that suit as she discarded a heart and a club, then led a spade up to make 2 of the last 3 tricks. This was worth quite a few IMPs, because only 4 North-South pairs played in 3NT. One declarer went down, two just made the contract, while partner made an overtrick.

And so to that third hand. When East-West sacrificed in 5♥ over 4♠, it was very awkward for North, because while there was a 6-3 fit in spades, the singleton ♥K was probably worthless and the queen-top diamond suit was of questionable value.

Board 47

Dealer S | Vul N-S

♠ Q72
♥ K
♦ QJT5
♣ AK974

♠ T9	N	♠ J8
♥ T8753		♥ AQ964
♦ K92	W	♦ A7643
♣ Q86	S	♣ 5

♠ AK6543
♥ J2
♦ 8
♣ JT32

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	5	-	-	5	-
S	5	-	-	5	-
E	-	2	3	-	-
W	-	2	3	-	-

Across the field, 8 North-South pairs were allowed to play in 4♠. Those who sacrificed achieved a major gain, because 5♥ was just 2 down – there were 6 East-West pairs in this contract, only one of them doubled. Just one North-South pair took the push to 5♠, which as it happened was cold.

The moral of the story appears to be that at Swiss IMP Pairs, there is no such thing as an overbid!! 🟩